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THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT ON JOB SATISFACTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR FIRMS IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

The principal aim of this paper is to explore the impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in ISO Certified Large-Scale manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala and its sector-wise comparison. Data for this study was collected using a Pre-tested questionnaire that was distributed to 60 ISO certified Large-Scale manufacturing firms (24 from public sector and 36 from private sector) in Kerala selected by purposive sampling method under non-random sampling technique from the database of Kerala State Industrial Development Council, Trivandrum. Two Top level managers (GM/MD/CEO's, DGM etc.) from each firm were the respondent of the survey. 120 top level managers are selected for the study from both sectors (48 from public sector and 72 from private sector). Correlation analysis was used to analyze the collected data with the help of SPSS Software. The study reveals that there is a positive impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in manufacturing firms in Kerala and impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in private sector higher than public sector. In addition, study also reveals that there is no positive impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in public sector manufacturing firms in Kerala. Data collected for assessing Employee Empowerment and Job satisfaction was from the top level managers of the firm, not from employees directly. The study reflects, only the perceptions of top level managers regarding the Employee Empowerment and Job satisfaction in manufacturing firms in Kerala. So this secondary nature data may lead to the biased results. This paper presents new data and empirical insights into the relationship between Employee Empowerment and Job satisfaction in ISO certified Large-Scale manufacturing firm in Kerala and its differences in Public and Private sectors.

KEYWORDS

employee empowerment, job satisfaction, ISO certification.

INTRODUCTION

Employee empowerment is a management practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with employees so that they can take initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance. Empowerment is based on the idea that giving employees skills, resources, authority, opportunity, motivation, as well holding them responsible and accountable for outcomes of their actions, will contribute to their competence and satisfaction.

This empirical research paper discusses the impact of empowerment among the employees on their job satisfaction in manufacturing sector industries in Kerala both public and private sector and its sector wise differences

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment means encouraging the people to make decisions with least intervention from higher management (Handy, 1993). Employee empowerment is defined as giving the power to employees to make decisions. It is a form of freedom in which employee takes decisions to ensure maximum satisfaction to customers. Empowerment is the initial, fundamental and an extraordinary aspect for achievement of success and growth for any business and enhances the productivity. Employees and customer satisfaction is, therefore, effected by empowerment using it as a tool through which businesses goals could be obtained. Employees are the assets of an organization and can make or break the organization. Highly motivated employees give the unexpected output while employees with low motivation level can drag the company growth downwards (Deal, 2005). Lawler & Mohram (1989) defined the employee involvement as it a proper procedure to compete the capability of worker for enhancing their commitment and achievement of growth and success of organization.

Employee empowerment is a strategy and philosophy that enables employees to make decisions about their jobs. Employee empowerment helps employees own their work and take responsibility for their results. Employee empowerment helps employees serve customers at the level of the organization where the customer interface exists. These are the ten most important principles for managing people in a way that reinforces employee empowerment, accomplishment, and contribution.

1. Demonstrate That Value People
2. Share Leadership Vision
3. Share Goals and Direction
4. Trust People
5. Provide Information for Decision Making
6. Delegate Authority and Impact Opportunities, Not Just More Work
7. Provide Frequent Feedback
8. Solve Problems: Don't Pinpoint Problem People
9. Listen to Learn and Ask Questions to Provide Guidance
10. Help Employees Feel Rewarded and Recognized for Empowered Behavior

GENERAL ADVANTAGES OF EMPOWERMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

- Increased job satisfaction
- Effective Team work
- Increased employee participation
- Reduces Turnover rates.
- Increases trust in the organization
- Lower absenteeism degree
- Better productivity and profitability
- Less conflict as employees will more likely agree with changes if they can get involved in the decision making process

JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is an area that has been well researched in the industrial and organizational psychology literature. However, it is a concept that is still surrounded by controversy because much of the literature is inconclusive in nature Morgan *et. al.*, (1995).

Defining job satisfaction is problematic since it has been considered in a variety of ways, and defined differently in various studies (Lam, Zhang and Baum, 2000). They further argue that if there is consensus about job satisfaction, it is the verbal expression of an incumbent's evaluation of his/her job. The popular definition that has been made reference to in the literature is that advanced by Locke, (1976). He defined the concept of job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Locke further argues that the satisfaction is achieved when one realizes one's important job values provided these are congruent with or help to fulfill one's basic needs. The values or conditions conducive to job satisfaction are:

- Mentally challenging work which the individual can cope successfully
- Personal interest in the work itself
- Work that is not too physically tiring
- Rewards for performance that are just, informative and in line with the individual's personal aspirations
- Working conditions that are compatible with the individual's physical needs and that facilitate the accomplishment of his work
- High self esteem on the part of the employee
- Agents in the work place who help the employee to attain job values such as interesting work, pay and promotions, whose basic values are similar to his own, and who minimize role conflict and ambiguity.

Employee job satisfaction is the terminology used to describe whether employees are happy and contented and fulfilling their desires and needs at work. Many measures purport that employee satisfaction is a factor in employee motivation, employee goal achievement, and positive employee morale in the workplace. "employee satisfaction is defined as "the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs"

Wexley and Yukl (1997) say that job satisfaction is "the way an employee feels about his or her job". Gupta (1991) say that employee loyalty has a strong tendency towards job satisfaction, suggesting that when an employee is more loyal to the organization, he will feel satisfied with the organization.

FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Some researchers found that a positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. For example, Rinehart and Short (1994) found a strong and positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. Dennis (1999) also found a strong relationship between the variables of employee involvement and job satisfaction in his search for factors influencing job satisfaction in the prison environment.

Some interesting positive links between employee involvement and job satisfaction have been found in the nursing field. For example, Kanter (1993) in her studies argued that in nursing, empowerment has been shown to predict important organizational outcomes, such as trust in management, perceived control over nursing, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Nykodym, et al.1994) assert that participation causes greater job satisfaction because the employee feels more valued and trusted by management and because the worker gains a better understanding of management difficulties by dealing with some of the same problems. So, the researcher wants to explore the impact of Employee Empowerment on job satisfaction in ISO certified Large-Scale manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala and its sector-wise comparison

This study seeks to provide answers to the following two research questions

1. What is the impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala?
2. Is there any difference in the impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in public and private sector manufacturing firms in Kerala?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala
2. To compare the impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in public and private sector manufacturing firms in Kerala

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The existing literature has clearly shown that no large-scale empirical research has been systematically conducted to explore the impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in manufacturing firms both private and public sector undertakings in Kerala. In order to bridge this research gap, a study related with Employee Empowerment and Job Satisfaction in manufacturing firms both private and a public sector undertaking in Kerala is truly needed. This study compares the impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in the public and private sector manufacturing firms in Kerala.

On the basis of these analyses, Top level managers of the manufacturing firm in Kerala can understand that how Employee Empowerment efforts helps to achieve employee job satisfaction in their firm.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted among the ISO Certified large-scale manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala, irrespective of nature of product produced.

METHODOLOGY

SECONDARY DATA

The secondary data is collected from review of existing literatures and published sources such as information of enterprises, journals, articles, PhD thesis, websites etc.

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data collected for this study from the Top level managers of ISO certified, Large Scale manufacturing organizations in Kerala with the help of a pre-tested questionnaire.

RESEARCH STRATEGIES

The study carried out with descriptive type of research. The survey conducted among the ISO certified Large-Scale manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala. Likert scale was adopted to measure the questions of Employee empowerment and eamemployee satisfaction. The questionnaire has been designed on 5-point scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). Purposive sampling method under non-random sampling techniques was adopted to select the organizations for the study both public and private sector undertaking. 60 organizations are selected as sample firms which contain 24 from public sector and 36 from private sector. 2 Top level managers (GM/MD/CEO's, DGM etc.) from each firm were the respondent of the survey. 120 top level managers are selected for the study from both sectors (48 from public sector and 72 from private sector).

TOOL USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

To exploring the impact of Employee Empowerment and Job Satisfaction in both public and private sector manufacturing firms in Kerala and it's sector-wise comparison, the statistical tool, correlation co-efficient was used.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Data collected for assessing Employee Empowerment and Job Satisfaction was from the top level managers of the firm, not from employees directly. The study reflects, only the perceptions of top level managers regarding the Employee Empowerment and Job Satisfaction in manufacturing firms in Kerala. So this secondary nature data may lead to the biased results.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION**

The following hypothesis was made to assessing the impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction.

H0.1: There is no positive impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala

H1.1: There is a positive impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala

TABLE 1

Independent factor	Dependent factor	Correlation	P Value
Employee Empowerment	Job Satisfaction	0.520	<0.001

From the above table, the correlation between Employee Empowerment and Job satisfaction is 0.520 and is significant at 1% level. So it can be concluded that there is a positive impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala

SECTOR-WISE COMPARISON

H0.2: Impacts of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in public sector manufacturing firms are not higher than private sector

H1.2: Impacts of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in public sector manufacturing firms are higher than private sector

TABLE 2

Attribute	Sector	Correlation	P. Value
Impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction	Public	0.337	0.001
	Private	0.538	0.001

The above table indicates that the impact of Employee Empowerment in the Public sector manufacturing firm is 0.337 at 1% significant level is less than the private sector which is 0.538 at 1% significant level. So it can be concluded that impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in public sector manufacturing firms in Kerala not higher than private sector.

From this analysis, it is clear that there is no positive impact of Employee Empowerment on employee satisfaction in public sector manufacturing firms in Kerala

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**FINDINGS**

1. Employee Empowerment has a positive impact on Job Satisfaction in manufacturing firms both public and private sectors in Kerala
2. Impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in private sector higher than public sector manufacturing firms in Kerala
3. There is no positive impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in public sector manufacturing firms in Kerala

SUGGESTIONS

The study reveals that there is no positive impact of Employee Empowerment on employee Job satisfaction in public sector manufacturing firms in Kerala. Whereas, there is a positive impact of Employee Empowerment on employee Job satisfaction in private sector manufacturing firms in Kerala. So the public sectors firms must empower their employees to achieve the synergic organizational functioning and higher employee satisfaction

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the role of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in manufacturing industries in Kerala both public and private sector and its sector wise differences. The study reveals that there is a positive impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in manufacturing firms in Kerala and impact of Employee Empowerment on Job satisfaction in private sector higher than public sector. In addition, study also reveals that there is no positive impact of Employee Empowerment on Job Satisfaction in public sector manufacturing firms in Kerala

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